

Closing Hours by mlmsteveharrington

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Summary:

The Scoops Troop gets back from certain doom, only to find that Billy Hargrove wants a sundae.

Closing Hours

Author's Note:

- For [my good pal andy](#).

pretend uhhh billy wasn't flayed and the scoops troop got back not in the middle of the night... sounds good? i need your suspension of disbelief. okay. love ya.

i wrote this in one sitting at my computer so please be patient with me n any mistakes i make!!! also yes it does really end there i wanted a cliffhanger.... implied harringrove btw leavin you at the edge of your damn seats.

‘Well, that was climactic.’

Those were the only words spoken when the group got back to Scoops Ahoy. They came from none other than Henderson himself, presumably trying to ease the mood. Nobody else said a word.

The parlor's bright florescent lights flickered on and off rhythmically as both Robin and Steve found themselves in the back of the Scoops Ahoy storage room, where Dustin was already tending to an - albeit brave - terrified Erica. Thankfully their injuries were more minor, and didn't require immediate medical attention. Still, a bandaid here and an icepack there never hurt anyone, especially since there was copious amounts of both on hand.

‘Good thing we work at Scoops,’ Robin said absentmindedly, reaching for another pint of vanilla, ‘keeps down the swelling,’ she chucked the container to Steve, and grabbed another one for herself. Steve managed a weak chuckle in between shakes of a rubbing alcohol

bottle. Thank god it was company policy to carry a First-Aid kit. Who knew you could get injured scooping ice cream?

‘About what I said earlier,’ Robin paused to survey her surroundings - thankfully Dustin and Erica had found themselves distracted with the amount of free ice cream they were now surrounded by - but lowered her voice instinctively just in case. Steve looked up from the medkit with a curious raised eyebrow. ‘You’re not going to tell anyone, right?’

‘Robin, are you kidding me? Only a real asshole would-‘

‘I only ask because you’ve been quiet.’

‘I’m not “being quiet!”’ Steve laughs, deflecting. ‘We just went through hell and back together.’ He places a hand on Robin’s shoulder. ‘I meant it when I said I found a great girl,’ he gave her shoulder a squeeze, ‘you’re my friend.’ Steve stole a quick glance over his shoulder, ‘actually. Now that I know you’re...’ he trailed off, fearing he might say the wrong words, ‘well, I’ve been meaning to-‘

With that, their tender moment was interrupted by a sound at the front door.

Ding.

Shit. Steve looked up at the clock - 7:59. What kind of asshole would get ice cream right before closing? Robin gave Steve a knowing look, and Steve sighed complacently. Scrambling to the front, Steve grabbed the nape of his shirt and started patting the dried blood around his eye, hoping to make himself appear more... presentable.

‘Ahoy! My name is Steve, are you ready to set sail on-‘ Steve abruptly stopped in his tracks when he locked eyes with the person who had so rudely interrupted him and Robin moments earlier.

Hargrove.

'Fuuuuuck.' Billy took a step forward, practically leaning his chest against the counter. It was clear that he had just gotten off a shift- he was still wearing his red shorts and a tight-fitting tank top labelled 'lifeguard', and his signature red whistle hung proudly in front of his chest. 'Pretty boy got his shit rocked, huh?'

Steve said nothing. It was bad enough he had the living shit beat out of him, but now... Billy Hargrove was right in front of him. Billy Hargrove, the man who had beaten him almost to a pulp a little under a year ago. Billy Hargrove, the self-proclaimed new king of Hawkins. Billy Hargrove, the man that led to Steve's eventual social downfall.

Billy Hargrove, the man that made Steve's heart skip a beat every single time he looked at him.

'Earth to Harrington?' Billy snapped in front of Steve's face, eventually taking the toothpick he was working along his lips and flicking it onto Steve's forehead.

'What can I get you today?' Steve reverted back to default settings, something he had learned at the first day during orientation. Had a difficult customer? Follow protocol.

'What can you get *me*?' Billy huffed, instinctively puffing out his chest. 'I'd be worrying about yourself right now, pretty boy. The chicks only dig scars in the movies,' Billy laughed at his own joke (well, rather, social commentary). 'Got in a fight with the missus?'

‘What?’ Steve looked up to meet his eyes again. He found himself getting lost in a sea of blue. *Now’s not the time, Steve*, he told himself, admiring the beauty in the other man in front of him.

‘ROBIN!’ Billy called, snapping his fingers to make more noise. ‘Your boy’s broken. I want a different one.’

‘Hold your horses, asshole,’ Robin called from the other side of the swinging door, using her back to push it open. ‘Shit, Steve, are you okay?’

‘So it was both of you then, huh? A little bit of a domestic dispute?’

‘Shut it, Billy. We were attacked,’ she grabbed an ice cream scoop, and pushed Steve gently aside. ‘We’re closing soon, and my patience is wearing thin. I’m only going to ask you once. What the fuck do you want?’

‘Attacked? By who, huh?’ Billy teased, egging Robin on.

‘I asked you what you wanted.’

‘I’m not telling you what I want until you tell me what happened to you.’

‘Then we aren’t serving you, douchebag. Get out.’

‘Robin, sweetheart. Can I call you sweetheart?’ He pauses, but doesn’t let Robin respond. ‘I just want to know what my dear friend Harrington’s got going all. That’s all.’

‘We’re closed. Leave.’

Billy instinctively cracks his knuckles, the crunching loud enough for both Dustin and Erica to hear back in the freezer. ‘I don’t think you’re really in the mood for a fight right now, princess. Or should I call you Harrington’s knight in shining armor?’

Robin looked to Steve for reassurance, and without saying anything, he gave her a nod. *Tell him.*

‘Would you believe us if we told you it was Russians?’

Billy paused a moment, and then dragged himself on top of the ice cream display case. He sat, legs dangling in front of the ice cream, his boots almost touching the myriad of flavors. ‘Go on, I’m listening.’

‘Long story short, Hawkins is occupied by Soviets,’ a pause for dramatic effect. ‘They’re under the mall. Experimenting... something. I could tell you, but I’d have to kill you,’ Robin makes a small joke, trying to lighten the mood. Billy doesn’t budge. He seemed... concerned? Listening, at least. ‘We were interrogated. Tortured, to put it lightly. Steve took the brunt of it. Dingus couldn’t keep his

mouth shut.'

There's an uncomfortable silence. Billy looks down at the ground, his demeanor... changed. Suddenly he perks up, and looks directly at Robin. 'Cherries. Maraschino.'

'What?'

'I know you have them in the back. Go get them.'

'Billy, you can't be serious. We just-'

'Now. I need to speak to Harrington. *Alone.*'

Steve's heart raced as Robin looked over to him. He gave a small nod, allowing her to go ahead.

'I'll be back. And *listening*. Don't try anything.' With that, she was gone.

After he was sure the coast was clear, Billy slid off the counter to behind the register, feet away from where Steve was standing. Afraid. Rigid. Tired. Billy took a step forward, and spoke with a demanding tone. 'Look at me.' As Steve's eyes met Billy's, Billy raised his arm, and... -

Instead of Billy's fist colliding with Steve's face, though, a comforting hand finds its way to his cheek. Steve shakes with both fear and embarrassment.

'Banged ya up real good, yeah?' Billy hums in a quiet tone, pushing the hair out of Steve's eyes. He cradles Steve's left cheek in his hand, calmly stroking the small cuts and abrasions on his face. He doesn't say anything - just keeps eye contact. His eyes seem... friendly. Less piercing, less *hurtful*. Something's behind them that Steve can't really pick out. Compassion, perhaps? ... Or maybe he was just trying to gain Steve's trust once again just to trip him up again. Somehow, it doesn't matter anymore to Steve. He's tired and afraid. There's no point in trying to act strong now. Billy's seen the weakest side of him. Billy knows he's damaged right now.

So Steve does the only thing he can do, and that is cry.

It starts off with a few droplets here and there, barely just wetting his eyelashes beneath his chestnut eyes. These pea-sized tears turn into waterfalls after what seems like only seconds. He never once breaks eye contact.

Billy instinctively pulls away, still not breaking eye contact. Nothing in his eyes change, there's that same compassionate glow in them.

'Harrington... Are you- are you.. crying?'